

### Promises, Promises

We all like to be able to keep our promises. We also like to see people keep their promises to us. And we hate it when promises are broken. When I was younger, I thought that someone breaking their promise to me was a major problem; as I've gotten older, I am more bothered by the promises I find myself unable to keep. That's why I try to be careful about what promises I make and to whom I make them.

God makes promises to us, and he never breaks his promises. The Bible calls some of these promises "covenants," since they involve responsibilities both by God and by us. This week we will study two of those covenants, as well as God's faithfulness in keeping his promises and how he works in us to cause us to carry out our part. Let's take a look at promises kept.

#### Monday – Our High Priest

*Covenant: an agreement between God and his people in which God makes certain promises and requires certain behavior from them in return.* Dictionary.com

1. Please read Hebrews 8:1-13. According to verses 1-6, why does Jesus serve as our high priest? Where?
2. What characteristics of the new covenant can you find in verses 7-13? What do they tell you about God and his people?
3. Now look at Philippians 2:13. How will we be able to fulfill our part of this covenant with God?

**Making it Personal:** Does having God's laws in your heart and mind sound attractive to you? Why or why not?

#### Tuesday – Our New Prophet

*"Where are your forefathers now? And the prophets, do they live forever? But did not my words and my decrees, which I commanded my servants the prophets, overtake your forefathers?"* Zechariah 1:5-6

1. Please read Deuteronomy 18:14-22. What problem is identified in verses 14-16? Why do you think the Israelites felt that way?
2. What solution does God provide in verses 17-22? What does he tell them to watch out for?

**Digging Deeper:** Read 1 Kings 22:1-40. Apply the test given in Deuteronomy 18:21-22 to determine who is God's prophet and who is not.

#### Wednesday – Our Complete Freedom

*"There are two freedoms: the false where a man is free to do what he likes; and the true where a man is free to do as he ought."* Charles Kingsley, 19<sup>th</sup> c. English pastor, educator and novelist

1. Please read Exodus 12:24-28. Why did God command the people to follow him? How did they respond?
2. According to Exodus 15:13, who is our guide? How do you know when God is guiding you?
3. Now look at Exodus 19:3-6. What is the reason God gives to follow him and the benefit he promises for doing so? According to verse 4, who was responsible for the Israelites coming to God in the first place?

**Making it personal:** How do you follow God's instructions written for you in the Bible?

#### Thursday – Our Eternal King

*"I will place no value on anything I have or may possess except in relation to the kingdom of Christ."* David Livingstone, 19<sup>th</sup> c. Scottish medical missionary

1. Please read 2 Samuel 7:8-21. What promise does God make in verse 8-17? How does this covenant differ from the one he made with the Israelites through Moses in Exodus?

**Text Insight:** 2 Samuel 7:8-17 is mixed prophecy, pertaining in part to David's son Solomon and in part to his descendant Jesus.

2. What is David's response in 2 Samuel 7:18-21? Now look at verse 21; why is God making this promise?
3. How does Ephesians 2:1-10 help you understand that God is the one who reaches out to us in starting this relationship, and not the other way around?

**Making it Personal:** According to Ephesians 2:5, what condition were you in when God began his relationship with you? Are you ready to acknowledge his grace in bringing you to him? Take time to thank him now.

#### Friday – Our Gracious Redeemer

*"We are justified, not by giving anything to God - what we do - but by receiving from God what Christ has done for us."* William Gurnall, 17<sup>th</sup> c. English pastor and author

1. Please read Psalm 103:7-19. How does verse 7 speak to the issues God raised with the Israelites in Exodus 12, 15 and 19 (which you read on Wednesday)?
2. How do verses 8-10 provide a bridge from God's covenant with Moses to his covenant with David?
3. Now compare verses 11-19 with Hebrews 8:7-9 (from Monday's lesson). What reason is given for bringing in the new covenant? According to Hebrews 8:10-12 and Philippians 2:13, who will make sure we keep God's commands?

**Prayer Focus:** Pray for hearts to be open to God's free and gracious gift, the gift of himself.

**For the Weekend:** Read 2 Samuel 7:18-29. What did David emphasize in response to God's new covenant with his people? What characteristics do you see David display that you would like to emulate?